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History of the Willow Pattern

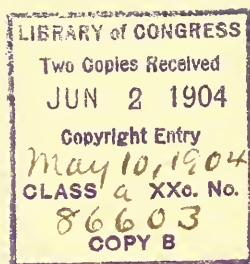


A M Burgess.

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History of the Willow Pattern.

There was once upon a time, now keep still
While I tell of a castle that stood on a hill,
With beautiful gardens and roses in bloom,
And near it a tower that looked like a tomb,

Now in it there dwelt an old, gouty lord
With a beautiful daughter 'twas said he adored.
There were many who called him a greedy old elf,
For keeping the maiden all to himself.

There lived in the castle besides the last two,
A nice, handsome fellow—they called him Andrew,
Who wrote my lord's letters—his whims understood,
But made love to the maiden whenever he could.

In a spot near the castle I ne'er shall forget,
Was a beautiful grotto where oft they had met;
Where true to her promise the love tryst to keep,
While the old man was taking his afternoon sleep.

And so time went on, 'til one unlucky day
Some mischevious monster did the lovers betray:
So instead of his nap, my lord followed to see,
And soon put his daughter under strong lock and key,

Fearing escape—to put out of her power
He locked the poor maiden up in the tower;
Then went off to bed without worry or doubt,
Saying, "There's no possibility of finding her out."

With this notion the youth did not seem to agree,
But constructed a ladder, his true love to see;
While she, by a silken cord, as he came within call,
Lowered a billet-doux over the wall:

Wherein she told him, "She could not forget
The sweet little grotto where oft they had met
How heavy her heart with dull sorrow and pain,
For her father had said they should ne'er meet again."

He laid to his heart the words that she wrote,
Then tied to the cord his own little note,
Telling the method by which he had found
She might, with safety, come down to the ground.

At midnight, when all at the castle was still,
The youth hastened down to the foot of the hill,
With a ladder of silk her light weight would scarce bend
That she with her jewels, might safely descend.

So out from the window, she felt no alarm
Soon to be resting on his strong loving arm,
Few were the hasty, but happy words said,
Lest her father should hear, and get out of bed.

The night it was cold, the darkness grew thick
When the old man awakened and came out with a stick,
In tones like the thunder he bade them remain.
On the night wind came answer, "No, never again."

Meantime the lovers had gone off in a jiff,
And made for the cottage at the foot of the cliff.
Where lived an old woman, who had promised to aid
In the rescue from prison of the poor little maid.

And there they arrived, so happy and free ;
The light boat was launched and soon o'er the sea
Where, no longer under the father's command,
They plighted their troth with the heart and the hand.

Then built there a cot, 'neath a wreath of green bowers,
In the midst of a garden with sweet blooming flowers ;
Where naught dwelt but smiles, they had banished their tears,
And here they lived happily for many long years.

Meantime the old lord, by sin so encumbered,
Had sought them in vain, for his wrath only slumbered ;
So, at length, he resolved to cross the dark water,
And cost what it might, to find his lost daughter.

Then went on his journey of many long hours—
Soon found the sweet cot, with its garland of flowers ;
And ere they could see him, or know whence he came,
He set fire to their house, and they died in the flame.

But forth from their ashes came the spirit of love,
Which manifested itself in the form of a dove,
And two snow white birds might be seen each day
Loving and kissing and cooing away.

The old lord disappeared—so this story goes—
What has become of him, nobody knows,
While the birds have flown upwards and found their sweet nest
Have folded their wings, are safe and at rest.

A. M. BURGESS.



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